

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

k

1. Name of Property

historic name: Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District

other name/site number: Walters Place, Criswell Place

2. Location

street & number: 790 Rock Creek Road N not for publication: n/a

city/town: Clyde Park vicinity: X

state: Montana code: MT county: Park code 087 zip code: 59018

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 determined eligible for the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 removed from the National Register

 see continuation sheet

 other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic DistrictPark County, MT

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Number of Resources within Property

Category of Property: District

Contributing Noncontributing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the

9 2 buildings

National Register: n/a

1 0 sites

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

1 5 structures0 0 objects11 7 Total

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuildings

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/residence

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER/vernacular

Materials:

foundation: LOG POSTS, WOOD BEAMS, CONCRETE

walls: FRAME

roof: WOOD SHINGLES, METAL; ASPHALT

other:

Narrative Description

In southcentral Montana, the Shields River flows southward, watered by abundant creeks from the mountains to the east and west, to join the Yellowstone River. The Shields River Valley stands between the Crazy Mountains to the east and the Bridger Mountains to the west. The Crazy Mountains are an isolated, very rugged mountain range that rises out of the surrounding high plains. The Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District is situated on the east bench lands high on the foothills of the Crazy Mountains.

Nestled adjacent to the headwaters of Chicken Creek, the Chicken Creek farmstead is located approximately eight miles east of the town of Clyde Park, in Park County, Montana. The Chicken Creek farmstead is a historic district that consists of 15 buildings and structures. The domestic unit contains a dwelling, garage, outhouse, garden shed and root cellar. The agricultural unit contains a shop, two barns, a wood granary, a steel grain bin and a non-historic machine shed. Above the farm buildings to the south are four non-historic steel grain bins. Some antique farm machinery is scattered north of the farmstead proper.

The Chicken Creek farmstead includes not only the building cluster, but also the agricultural fields historically associated with the property. The surrounding agricultural fields of 270 acres produce winter wheat and alfalfa by flood irrigation. The current owners have planted over 20 varieties of trees and shrubs along the Chicken Creek coulee. They have also added an 1100' long hedge along the western boundary as a windbreak/snow fence.

In addition to the historic property, which is the subject of this nomination, a nearby still intact farmstead was also associated with the original owners of the property. This situation is emblematic of the homestead era on the high plains, where family expansion to multiple properties made the difference between successful settlement and failure.

(see continuation sheet)

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District**Park County, MT****Name of Property****County and State****8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria: A
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a
Significant Person(s): n/a
Cultural Affiliation:

Areas of Significance:
AGRICULTURE; LAND SETTLEMENT
ARCHITECTURE/vernacular
Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1900-1958
Significant Dates: 1900, 1918, 1922, 1942
Architect/Builder:

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Chicken Creek farmstead is historically significant and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historic association with land settlement in the lower Shields River Valley in southcentral Montana. The Shields Valley retains much of the agricultural activity and character that inspired and guided its early settlement and the Chicken Creek farmstead is an integral and representative component of this landscape. The farmstead has existed in an isolated rural landscape throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century under the shadow of the Crazy Mountains.

The Chicken Creek farmstead represents several phases of land tenure from its beginning as part of the Northern Pacific land grant. In the early 1900s, the farmstead became the property of the Francis family whose family members amassed adjoining lands where the three sons operated a farming/ranching operation. Subsequently held for speculative purposes by Livingston lawyer Oliver Harvey, John J. Walters obtained the property in 1918 only to lose it in the depression after World War I. After Walters, Edward Shelton purchased the land and became an absentee landlord who rented the property, first back to Walters and then to a few other families during the 1930s depression. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Chicken Creek farmstead operated as a small family farm. The farmstead is significant not because it is unique or associated with a prominent individual but rather because it epitomizes the twentieth century land settlement experience on the high benches of the Shields Valley and is typical of settlement patterns throughout the region.

Homesteading legislation was flawed in its assumption that the acreage limits of 160 acres and later 320 acres were sufficient to comfortably support a typical agricultural farm family and a viably economic farming or ranching operation. As the history of this farmstead and its neighborhood shows so well, to be successful a settler had to either aggregate acreages together, generally by family clustering or lease lands to put together a viable agriculture operation. The Chicken Creek farmstead at various times in its history has exhibited both expression of that need. With the restoration of the original buildings at the Chicken Creek farmstead, the property remains a poignant and beautiful reminder of a century of land tenure and its legacies.

(see continuation sheet)

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District**Park County, MT****Name of Property****County and State****9. Major Bibliographic References**

(see continuation sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property:** 312 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	543725	5082270
B	12	543734	5082320
C	12	545349	5082282
D	12	545334	5081463

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): S1/2 Sec. 25, T2N R10E, MPM**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary begins at the intersection of Road Creek Road with Rock Creek Road N, then follows Rock Creek Road North ½ miles north to a cross fence. The boundary continues east along the cross fence until it reaches the continuation of Rock Creek Road that runs north/south at this point. The boundary follows this road south until it reaches the ninety degree turn in the road and then continues west along this road until reaching the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to encompass both the domestic and agricultural buildings and structures of the Chicken Creek Farmstead, as well as agricultural lands historically associated with the farmstead and presently held by the property owners.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Paul and Rachel Manganiello and Joan L. Brownell
organization: **date:** August 2008
street & number: 790 Rock Creek Road N **telephone:**
city or town: Clyde Park **state:** MT **zip code:** 59018

Property Owner

name/title: Paul and Rachel Manganiello
street & number: 790 Rock Creek Road N
city or town: Clyde Park **state:** MT **zip code:** 59018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 1

Description of Resources

Dwelling (constructed c. 1900-1906, one contributing building)

When the present owners, Paul and Rachel Manganiello arrived at the farmstead in October 2005, they needed a place to live. While the dwelling was in terrible shape, like the rest of the farmstead, they took a year restoring the dwelling, seeing the potential hidden behind the layers of alterations. They restored some of the original features like the fir floors and exterior siding. The windows, interior wall coverings, ceilings and trim were replaced or repaired based on what they found in the two bedrooms which still had the original double-hung windows, molding, 9 ½ foot ceilings and plaster walls. The Manganiellos collaborated closely with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office for all restoration and rehabilitation work on the dwelling.

This rectangular, wood frame, hipped roof one-story dwelling faces southwest and lies on the north slope above Chicken Creek. The dwelling sits on a rubblestone concrete foundation interspersed with large boulders, all recently faced with concrete. The concrete foundation is exposed above ground approximately two feet at its highest point. There is a cellar underneath the kitchen (east) portion of the dwelling with a crawlspace elsewhere. The floor has recently been reinforced with 8x8 treated beams.

Recently installed one-over-one double-hung windows (wood windows with fiberglass exterior) replace the original windows but are set in original framing. All windows have plain wide trim painted white. Original horizontal narrow lap siding has been restored and painted a bright marigold yellow. Bed molding, continuous frieze board and corner boards frame the dwelling.

The hip roof has new asphalt shingles with wood shingles underneath. Other roof features include extended enclosed eaves and a new (re-pointed) brick chimney protruding at the apex of the east roof hip. A full length enclosed hip roofed porch extends across the west wall. A previous owner, Walter Hoffman enclosed the original open porch in the 1940s. This facade wall holds a centered entrance flanked to each side by a row of three one-over-one double-hung windows. The entry, a new glass wood door, is approached by concrete steps and stoop with wood railing. A small full-length enclosed hipped roof addition extends across the east wall. The Hoffmans also built this addition. The addition holds a wood door at its south end and triple casement windows nearly centered on the wall.

Fenestration on the north and south walls is asymmetrical. The north wall holds five one-over-one double-hung windows of varying sizes across its length. The south wall holds three windows, including a one-over-one double-hung on the porch side wall, a centered cottage window with narrow one-over-one openings on each side and a small fixed window at the south wall of the rear addition.

The dwelling is a contributing building within the historic district.

Garage (constructed 1947, one contributing building)

Built by the Hoffmans in the late 1940s, this rectangular gabled roof, one-story garage is attached to the southeast corner of the dwelling for approximately one foot. Of wood frame construction and built into a side slope, this one-car garage sits on a poured concrete foundation and floor. Narrow lap siding, painted marigold yellow like the dwelling, clad the garage. The roof has an extended west slope, creating a salt-box appearance. Covered with wood shingles, roof features include enclosed eaves, frieze boards at the side walls and a metal ridge cap with end finials.

On the north wall, what appears as a tri-fold wood garage door is really a double slider with matching pedestrian door. Each section displays two panels and an upper four-light window. The south wall holds a slightly off-center single light window while two fixed single-light windows are placed symmetrically across the east wall. The west wall holds a fixed single-light window plus a solid five panel side door at its north end.

The garage is a contributing building within the historic district.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 2

Garden shed (constructed c. 1900-1920, one contributing building)

East of the garage and today used today as a garden shed, this gabled roof, rectangular, one-story shed sits on short vertical posts and wood beams all above ground, indicating the building was moved to this location, presumably from somewhere else within the farmstead. The shed possibly served as a hen house or temporary bunk house at one time. The gable roof is covered with wood shingles and wood shakes clad the gable ends. Other roof features include eaves flush with the walls and a low stove pipe protruding from the east slope.

Of wood frame construction, the shed is clad with drop siding framed by corner board remnants. The south wall exhibits a row of four vertical openings while the east wall holds a row of three vertical openings, all screened from the interior. The west wall holds a single four-vertical light window. The north facade wall holds a solid five panel door and one over one sliding windows.

The garden shed is a contributing building within the historic district.

Outhouse (constructed c. 1900-1920, one contributing building)

This two-seater outhouse stands immediately east of the garden shed and appears of the same vintage. Of wood frame construction, the outhouse sits on wood beams, indicating it was moved to this location, presumably from within the farmstead. Tarpaper and a few remaining wood shingles cover the gable roof. Both gable ends hold small round openings for ventilation. The outhouse is clad with drop siding framed by corner boards. The north wall holds a vertical board door. The interior holds two seats, a small sink and is still in service.

This outhouse is a contributing building within the historic district.

Root Cellar (constructed c. 1900-1906, one contributing building)

This root cellar is situated east of the outhouse and is built into a side hill. The root cellar probably was dug near the time when the dwelling was constructed. The cellar portion has collapsed into itself but its crude vestibule still stands. The cellar entry faces south. The wood framed entry has no door and is sheltered by a very steep shed roof covered with tar paper and rolled roofing. Four wood steps with an accompanying wood railing descend to the cellar (no interior entry visible). Tiers of railroad ties extend out from the entrance to support the side walls of the cellar.

The root cellar is a contributing building within the historic district.

Shop (constructed pre-1942, one contributing building)

When the Hoffmans arrived at the farmstead in 1942, a rectangular, gabled-roof building with exterior 2x4's stood at this location. A later 1948 historic photograph shows that they had sided over the building and installed sliding double doors on the west wall.

Standing approximately 90 feet east of the dwelling and south of the farm road, this shop building is built into a side hill with the south concrete foundation wall standing eighteen inches above ground. Of wood frame construction, this one-story, rectangular, gable roofed shop has a concrete floor that is deteriorating in places. Roof features include metal roofing, a metal ridgecap minus finials, extended enclosed eaves and a stove pipe protruding from the east roof slope.

Today, steel siding covers the entire building. The west side wall is slightly asymmetrical with nearly centered horizontal wood double sliding doors flanked to either side with fixed four-light windows. Two fixed four-light windows are placed symmetrically on the north and south end walls. The east wall holds a wood panel door with single upper light) near its center flanked to the east by a four-light fixed window.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 3

The shop is a contributing building within the historic district.

Granary (unknown construction date, one contributing building)

This rectangular, one-story, gabled roof granary stands today abandoned south of the farm road and east of the shop. The granary sits on a few 1x10 boards and appears to have been moved to this location at an unknown date. Exterior 2x4's support the walls clad on the interior with horizontal lap siding. Roof details include vertical boards in the gable ends, wood shingles (many missing) and wood ridgecap remnants. A portion of the west wall has collapsed. Both the west and east walls display possible window openings.

The granary is a contributing building within the historic district.

Dairy Barn (constructed c. 1900-1920, one contributing building)

Of wood frame construction, the dairy barn stands north of the farm road and west of the gambrel roof barn. No foundation was visible. The barn has a steep gable roof with two shed wings. Roof details include wood shingles, extended enclosed eaves and a metal ridge cap. Small four-light windows (now missing glass and muntins) are found in the apexes of the north and south gable end.

The barn is covered with drop siding still framed by corner boards in two corners. A continuous frieze board below the eaves encircles the barn. The south wall holds three entrances, one centered under the gable and two located at the wing corners. The middle door under the gable is a vertical tongue and groove board double door partially covered by plywood. Immediately above this door is a hinged opening, also covered with plywood.

At the east wing, a horizontal tongue and groove board door provides access while the west wing holds a vertical tongue and groove board door. A shuttered top-hinged rectangular opening is found between the west wing door and the center double doors.

The east wall holds two four-light windows and a horizontal lap board wood door. The north end wall exhibits a large hay mow door of vertical tongue and groove boards in the gable portion and an entry (now boarded shut) on the south end of the north wall. Two small openings (one boarded shut) are placed symmetrically at either end of the west side wall.

The dairy barn is a contributing building within the historic district.

Gambrel Barn (constructed c. 1900, one contributing building)

In 2008, Paul and Rachel Manganiello applied for a Montana State Historic Preservation Office rural property brick and mortar grant. All of the restoration and rehabilitation work on this barn has been directed by the State Historic Preservation Office and follows guidelines set forth in the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation.

The gambrel barn is considered contemporary with the dwelling and associated with the Francis brothers and their father, William Francis, the original owners of the property. An early 1930s Park County road survey map of this township shows three buildings at this location, including a barn. This rectangular, gambrel roofed barn is the eastern most building on the farmstead and stands north of the farm road. The gambrel roof framing is somewhat atypical with the upper pitch quite short in comparison to the longer lower rafters.

The barn represents the traverse type of barn where the center aisle traverses between large barn doors at the east and west end walls. Custom-built sliding doors made of two layers of vertical lap board have replaced the original doors found by the owners to be beyond repair. A wing added in 1946 (according to Park County records) that crossed the north wall has also been removed. A recently installed vertical board man door on the north end of the east wall replaces a non-historic door on the east wall.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 4

The barn contains thirteen four-light wood windows: six each on the north and south walls and one under the peak of the east facing gable. The original windows have recently been replaced with wood windows of the same dimensions and characteristics as the original windows. The new custom windows were constructed of pine and glazed with putty in the traditional way and set in the original framing. All trim is painted white.

New horizontal lap siding, recently primed and painted red, clad the barn framed with white corner boards. The original siding had deteriorated to such an extent that restoration was not feasible. Steel roofing, installed prior to the rehabilitation work, covers the gambrel roof. A hood extends over the west end wall and exhibits the hay pulley. The original large hay mow consists of two vertical tongue and groove board doors hinged from the interior. New small vertical board doors, also hinged on the inside, are centered immediately above both the east and west end barn doors.

The gambrel barn is a contributing building within the historic district.

Grain Bin (constructed c. 1950, one contributing structure)

Installed by the Hoffmans, this conical roofed steel grain bin is situated immediately south of the farm road, between the shop and machine shed. It has a 30 foot diameter and sits on a concrete pad. The door opening faces north. Lettering stenciled on the bin reads "R. R. Harvey, Clyde Park, Mont." This seems ironic since O. M. Harvey owned the property from 1906 to 1918 but no link between the two has been found. A crude pole structure serves as an apparent loading structure to the top of the bin.

The grain bin is a contributing structure within the historic district.

Granary foundation (constructed in 1977, one non-contributing structure)

This rectangular foundation sits east of the farmstead, on the south side of the farm road. It consists of thick concrete walls standing 18 inches in height. Constructed of rubblestone concrete, a wood frame granary once stood here. The date 1977 is written in the concrete, which indicates it was constructed by Ray Criswell.

The foundation is a non-contributing structure within the historic district.

Machine shed (constructed 1983, one non-contributing building)

Built by Ray Criswell, this large, rectangular shed roofed metal pole building stands south of the farm road. Constructed of vertical square posts, metal siding and roofing covers the shed. The north wall, facing the farm road, holds large ground to ceiling metal sliding double doors placed asymmetrically on the wall. A deteriorating plywood door stands at the west end of the wall. The south wall contains two one-over-one fixed windows (one boarded shut). Two opposing wide sliding metal doors are positioned across the south half of both the east and west walls. A sliding one-over-one sliding window is also situated on the east wall.

The machine shed is a non-contributing building within the historic district.

Grain Bins (post 1950, non-contributing structures)

One small and three large grain bins stand on the hillside within the cultivated field south of the farmstead proper. According to Park County tax records, all bins were installed in the late 1970s or early 1980s by Ray Criswell.

The grain bins are non-contributing structures within the historic district.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 5

Agricultural Fields

To the north, south and east of the building cluster are 270 acres of irrigated fields. Flood irrigation utilizes water from Rock Creek via ditches. The crops grown in 2008 include two fields in alfalfa and two fields in winter wheat.

The agricultural fields are a contributing site to the historic district.

District Integrity

The Chicken Creek Farmstead reflects the appearance and character of an evolving twentieth century farmstead that has existed for over 100 years. Location and setting are basically undisturbed with the farm cluster surrounded on three sides by cultivated fields. South of the farmstead on the hillside stand four non-historic steel bins but such bins are an integral feature of the agricultural landscape and therefore not viewed as intrusive. This farmstead presents an unusually scenic agricultural landscape, framed by the Crazy Mountains and essentially unchanged over the century since first settlement.

The Chicken Creek farmstead, in order to remain viable, has evolved over time and historic elements have been lost or replaced to compensate for new technologies, like tractors instead of draft horses. The utilitarian buildings within both the domestic and agricultural units were constructed by individuals who lived and worked the land and who made improvements when deemed necessary for their operation. All of the farm buildings initially served an important function for the farm. The 1983 non-historic machine shed within the agricultural unit is not overly intrusive and its construction fulfilled a need within the evolving farmstead. The farm size has fluctuated over the years and generally individuals acquired more lands to maintain financial viability. Today, the Chicken Creek farmstead retains a remnant of the land utilized by the larger operations of the past. Nevertheless the farmstead is still able to reflect its agricultural heritage, being surrounded by cultivated fields in three directions.

Before the rehabilitation efforts by the current owners, alterations to historic buildings had been minimal. In the 1940s, the Hoffman family changed the dwelling with an addition across the east wall and the front (west) porch enclosure. They also built the garage and re-sided the shop. It appears that several buildings (garden shed, outhouse and granary) were moved to their present location, presumably from within the farmstead.

Modifications within the farmstead result from the introduction and removal of buildings over the years. Available 1940s historic photographs show several agricultural buildings once stood north of the farm road, including a long rectangular machine shed and a gabled roof building north of the dairy barn.

Both the dwelling and the gambrel barn have recently been rehabilitated by the new owners. All work done has been under the direction of the Montana State Historic Preservation Office and has followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for historic preservation. Revitalization efforts have begun to restore the Chicken Creek farmstead to reflect its historic heritage within the rural agricultural landscape of the Shields River Valley.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 6

History of Chicken Creek Farmstead in the Shields River Valley

Lower Shields River Valley

Captain William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition explored the Yellowstone region in 1806 on his return journey to meet Meriwether Lewis on the Missouri River. Reaching the Yellowstone River not far from the present-day town of Livingston, Clark continued down the Yellowstone and passed the Shields River, named by Clark after John Shields, the gunsmith of the party. Clark wrote:

... this river is 35 yards wide deep and affords a great quantity of water it heads in those Snowey Mountains to the N W ... it contains some Timber Such as Cotton & willow in it's bottoms, and Great numbers of beaver the river also abounds in those animals as far as I have seen.¹

The immense wealth of furs reported by Lewis and Clark stimulated the development of the Upper Missouri Fur Trade, despite Indian hostilities. Trappers called the Shields River "Twenty-Five Yard" Creek.

Two reasons for the name: its width, which isn't twenty-five yards, but much less; and the asserted fact that it rises only twenty-five yards from the source of another stream, which I can neither affirm nor deny. Many sharp conflicts occurred here in older times between the resolute trappers and bands that were want to frequent the locality and the vengeful Blackfeet who then lorded over it."²

In the late 1830s, Osborne Russell wrote of coming down the Yellowstone with Jim Bridger and other trappers. While the majority of the party camped at the mouth of the Shields River, Russell and a small party trapped beaver upstream about twenty-five miles on the Shields. He described the country as "... mostly comprised of high rolling ridges thickly clothed with grass and herbage and crowded with imense bands of Buffaloe intermingled with bands of antelope ...". The following year Russell attempted to trap up the Shields but "found this part of the country had recently been trapped by the Blackfeet."³

The Shields River served as part of the western Crow Territory boundary and separated Crow Territory from Blackfeet Territory under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. This treaty designated Crow Territory from the headwaters of the Yellowstone River down to "the mouth of Twenty-five Yard Creek [Shields River]; thence to the head-waters of the Muscle-shell River to its mouth ... " extending to the Powder River to the east and extending south into the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming. Under the Stevens Treaty of 1855, lands west of the Shields, defined as Blackfoot Territory under the Fort Laramie Treaty, were designated "common hunting grounds" for all tribes.⁴

Regardless of these designations, advancing expeditions, explorations and eventually emigrant trains invaded the region, especially along the Yellowstone River. The lower Shields River Valley became one of the transportation corridors used to enter the Gallatin Valley.

¹ Gary E. Moulton, editor, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Vol. 8, June 10-September 26, 1806, 186.

² Bradley, Lieutenant James H, *The March of the Montana Column*, edited by Edgar I. Stevens, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961): 29.

³ Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, edited by Audrey Haines, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965): 47.

⁴ Crow and Blackfeet treaties and agreements are available in Charles J. Kappler, compiled and edited, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* 2 vols. (Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office (GPO) 1904); see <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler>.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 7

In 1859-60, Captain William R. Reynolds led a government expedition to explore the Yellowstone River and adjacent regions. A detachment under the command of Lieutenant Henry E. Maynadier traveled along the Yellowstone and up the Shields River Valley to cross over the mountains into the Gallatin Valley.⁵

In 1863, James Stuart, an early Montana pioneer, led a group of men to explore for gold in the Yellowstone drainage. They arrived at the Yellowstone after traveling down the east bank of the Shields, which Stuart described as a “beautiful tableland on the east side of the river, and low, broken hills to the west.” They prospected briefly and “found a good color of gold on the river but not enough to justify us to stop and prospect thoroughly.”⁶

In the early 1860s, the discovery of placer gold on Grasshopper Creek in now southwestern Montana and subsequent discoveries at Alder Gulch and Last Chance Gulch necessitated the development of travel routes to the newly discovered gold fields. Overland routes between 1864 and 1866 traveled along the Yellowstone River with the mouth of the Shields River serving as the division point between the Bozeman and Bridger trails. Jim Bridger guided emigrant trains northward up the east side of the Shields for approximately 10 to 12 miles, crossed the river and then traveled over Brackett Creek (which joins the Shields River below Clyde Park) and Bridger Canyon into the Gallatin Valley. John Bozeman and John Jacobs favored a route that crossed the Shields River near its mouth and ascended over the trail known as Bozeman Pass, directly west of present-day Livingston.⁷

With the expanded traffic through the Yellowstone Valley, Indian depredations increased. After the death of John Bozeman in 1867, the local citizens organized the Montana Militia for the protection of settlers in the Upper Yellowstone and the Gallatin Valley. These volunteers spent the winter of 1867-68 near the mouth of the Shields River at Camp Ida Thoroughman. Fort Ellis was established east of Bozeman, MT in 1867 and troops briefly patrolled the Shields and Upper Yellowstone area.

Efforts to remove native peoples brought further reductions of Indian Territory. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 reduced Crow Territory to lands south and east of the Yellowstone River, thereby opening lands north of the Yellowstone, including the Shields River Valley, to settlement.⁸

In 1872, a supply and trading post and ferry north of the Yellowstone called Benson’s Landing served the Upper Yellowstone region, the newly established Crow Agency on Mission Creek and travelers along the Yellowstone River. With the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883, the town of Livingston, a few miles further upstream, replaced Benson’s Landing. Livingston became the county seat in 1888 after Park County was created out of Gallatin County in 1887.⁹

Land Settlement

Lands could not be patented until a federal government survey had been approved. The General Land Office (GLO) surveyed the lower Shields River in 1873. The GLO map for the township (T2N R10E) where Chicken Creek farmstead is located shows no settlers or improvements within the township. The surveyor described the lands in this township as “principally of bench and table

⁵ H. W. Maynadier, “Report on route between the Yellowstone and Platte rivers,” in Gen. W. R. Reynolds, *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River*, (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1868): 140-142.

⁶ James Stuart, “The Yellowstone Expedition of 1863,” *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana* Vol. 1, (Helena, MT: Independent Publishing, 1902): 142-144.

⁷ The authority on the Bozeman Trail is Susan Badger Doyle, *Journeys to the Land of Gold*, 2 vols. (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2000). Many of the journals mention making camp at the mouth of the Shields.

⁸ Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*.

⁹ Livingston became a railroad division point with machine and repair shops. Livingston also became the entrance to Yellowstone National Park with the completion of the Northern Pacific Yellowstone Branch line in 1883.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 8

land. The soil is of a good average quality and the land covered with a luxuriant [sic] growth of grass, affording an excellent range for stock. Two good sized streams flow through the township which with their many tributaries, afford an abundance of water.”¹⁰

Most lands in Park County north of the Yellowstone were considered open range which deterred land settlement. Nelson Story, who drove the first cattle into Montana from Texas in 1866, had a cattle camp near the present-day town of Livingston and wintered his cattle in the region, including up the Shields. Stock raising continued as the primary industry into the 1900s with large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle ranging in all directions from Livingston, including the foothills of the Crazy Mountains.

Land settlement in the lower Shields River Valley was complicated by the checkerboard pattern (all odd numbered sections) that resulted from the Northern Pacific Railway (NPRR) land grant by which the NPRR acquired lands to either side of its right-of-way. After the issuance of patents from the government, the NPRR or its land department, the Northwest Improvement Company, could legally sell their land to interested buyers. Through the NPRR land grant, the railroad received 50% of all patented land in the township (T2N R10E). William Francis and William Cole purchased all of Section 25 (including the farmstead location) from the railroad in 1900. The railroad sales ranged from small parcels to entire sections. NPRR land sales in this region started slowly and gained momentum in the early 1900s. The checkerboard pattern provided farmers or ranchers the opportunity to augment their land holdings by combining railroad lands purchased with lands acquired under public land laws.¹¹

Settlement of non-railroad lands in the township (T2N R10E) where the farmstead is located spans from 1890 to 1920 and reflects a steady patenting of land rather than boom periods. Excluding railroad lands, homestead patents, generally for 160 acres, were the most important patenting process in the township, as it was for most townships in the Shields Valley. Cash patents followed, representing cash payment for desert land certificates or outright purchases of small acreages.¹²

In this township, the first recorded homestead patent was in 1890. The numbers fluctuated each year between two and three until the most active patenting years of 1898 and 1899. These years experienced the most patents issued, totaling nine homestead patents and five cash patents. In 1904, six individuals successfully completed their homestead patent whereas 1906 saw only one individual received his final homestead patent while four desert land certificates were finalized by cash payments. Successful patents ranged between one and three until 1912 and then no activity until 1915 with three patents received followed by one in 1920.

Family clustering occurred throughout this area, with husband, wives and children acquiring lands adjacent to one another. William Francis and his brother-in-law purchased railroad land in 1900 (which included the farmstead location). William Cole received his homestead patent for lands immediately north of the railroad section. Sara Francis, wife of William Francis and her son Thomas settled next to each other directly west of the farmstead location. The two other Francis boys, Charles and Oscar, also purchased lands in adjacent sections.

As the high benches below the Crazy Mountains filled with families like the Francis family, a small community grew in the Rock Creek area by the early 1900s. A ranch post office was established at Rock Creek as early as 1902. Eventually schools opened in the vicinity including the Pleasant View School located a few miles west of the farmstead.

¹⁰ U.S. Surveyor General, General Land Office 1973 Survey Map and Notes T2N R10E, Microfiche, Records Room, Bureau of Land Management Regional Office, Billings, MT.

¹¹ Deed Books, Office of Clerk and Recorder, Park County Courthouse, Livingston, MT.

¹² U. S. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, Microfiche, Records Room, Montana Bureau of Land Management Regional Office, Billings, MT. For a discussion on land settlement of five townships near T2N R10E, refer to Joan L. Brownell and Kenneth W. Karsmizki, “Historic Properties Cultural Resource Inventory For Three Candidate Gwen Sites in Park County, Montana,” Prepared for SRI International by Western History Research, Bozeman, MT, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 9

Agriculture in Shields River Valley

By 1900 agriculture was gradually developing throughout the Shields Valley. In 1900 Park County had 532 farms, 730 in 1910 and 756 by 1920. One early state promotional report commented that the bench lands produce an "excellent quality of wheat" and the foothills offer "splendid inducements" for livestock.¹³ By 1909, the Shields Valley was being promoted as one of the best farming regions in Montana.

In 1910, the *Polk Directory* expounded upon the richness of the agricultural lands west of Clyde Park.

...while the bench lands, extending towards the Crazies, are a paradise for the growth of winter wheat, as the mountain snows lie here throughout the winter, affording entire protection to grain sown in the autumn, allowing it to mature in the early summer before the need of artificially supplied [sic] moisture is felt.¹⁴

The availability of water from the numerous tributaries of the Shields River plus simple flood irrigation systems of ditches allowed for successful grain production in the Shields Valley during the first decade of the twentieth century. The *Livingston Enterprise* noted that "... the only bugbear to a more rapid settlement of this region is its distance from market and railway facilities, consequently stockraising is the leading industry."¹⁵ The opening of the Shields River Branch line of the Northern Pacific to Clyde Park by the end of 1909 increased settlement and farming in the Shields River Valley. In 1910, the branch line terminated eight miles north and created the town of Wilsall.

The first store in Clyde Park did not open until 1901. Prior to that, a post office opened at the ranch of Tom Tregloan and John Harvey. They had just imported a registered Clydesdale stallion and decided to name the post office Clyde Park. The town of Clyde Park became a trading center for the Lower Shields Valley (approximately eight miles northwest of the farmstead location). A year after the branch line reached Clyde Park, 25 new buildings were constructed. Between 1901 and 1915, Clyde Park's population grew to 752 people. Businesses boomed that over the years included two hotels, two banks, a feed and livery stable, butcher shop, saloons, poolhall, general mercantile, bank, drug store, blacksmith shop and a dance hall and restaurant.¹⁶

In 1910, state promotional reports encouraged diversified farming in Park County. In 1913, Shields Valley grain won numerous prizes at the Montana State Fair in Helena. The following year (1914), Clyde Park farmers entered the Dallas International Corn Exposition and again their grains beat out other competitors. Based on a *Livingston Enterprise* article, Jerry Brekke, Park County historian reported that the "Shields Valley land sold for \$1.50 and [sic] acre at the turn of the century and had escalated to \$25.00 an acre by 1913. Within a week of the Dallas show, land in the valley was advertised at \$50.00 per acre."¹⁷

It is interesting to note that the population of Park County, after the initial influx in the late 1890s and early 1900s did not fluctuate by as much as a thousand residents from 1900 to 1940.¹⁸ After years of successful crops, the drought years began in 1917 and by 1919 encompassed two-thirds of the state. Production decreased and economic depression followed with one out of every two farmers in Montana losing their land to foreclosure. By 1923, state reports suggested stock raising as being more suitable for the region except in the well irrigated valleys of the Yellowstone and the Shields.

By 1925, Park County saw a loss of approximately 137 farms, from 756 in 1920 to 619 in 1925. That same year, tenants constituted 28 % of the farms in Park County as compared to 16.7% in 1920. In Montana, tenancy has been a common practice "where a large

¹³ Montana Department of Agriculture, Labor and Industry, "Reports" 1900, 1906, 1909 (Helena, MT: Independent Publishing Co.).

¹⁴ Polk Directory 1910.

¹⁵ *Livingston Enterprise*, "Historical, Biographical and Scenic Description of Park County, Enterprise Souvenir," Livingston, MT:

¹⁶ Bill and Doris Whithorn, *Photo History of Shields Valley* (Livingston, MT: The Park County News; Jerry Brekke, "Shields history more precious than gold," *Livingston Enterprise*, September 3, 2002.

¹⁷ Jerry Brekke, "Shields Valley grain best in the world," *Livingston Enterprise*, September 15, 2003.

¹⁸ US Census Bureau, "Population," 1890, 1900, 1910, 1930, 1940.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 10

portion of the land in farms is leased or rented from the owners by the farm operator.” The number of farms/ranchers operated by tenants increased “almost continuously since 1880.”¹⁹

Although the late 1920s saw a brief period of prosperity, it was short-lived and in 1929, the lower Shields Valley like the rest of Montana saw the beginnings of “drought, depression and depopulation.” Such conditions increased tenancy of farms within Park County. By 1935, the percentage of farms in Park County operated by tenants numbered 30 to 34 %.²⁰ E. M Shelton retained ownership of the subject property until the early 1940s and rented out his ranch consistently throughout this period.

Montana experienced severe drought and economic depression that lasted until the 1940s, creating reduced circumstances and decreasing the number of farms. Improved climatic conditions combined with improved farm prices due to World War II brought another agricultural boom period to Montana. In Park County between 1940 and 1945 the number of farms and ranches remained fairly constant.

In 1951 there were 564 farms in Park County, half of them irrigated within the Shields River Valley and the Yellowstone River Valley. The major industry continued to be livestock raising, primarily cattle. Major crops in the early 1950s included winter wheat, spring wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa hay and grass hay. Most hay and some grain were used for winter feeding.²¹

The railroad branch line to Wilsall stopped service in the late 1950s which subsequently affected the economy and population of the Shields Valley. Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, agriculture in the lower Shields Valley and much of Montana can be described as an “unpredictable livelihood,” due to fluctuating farm prices and cyclical climatic conditions.²² Farm and ranch sizes increased during the latter half of the twentieth century, while the total number of farms decreased. The lower Shields Valley has managed to retain its agricultural landscape although encroaching subdivisions are a constant threat.

Chicken Creek Farmstead

The Chicken Creek farmstead spans over 100 years of occupation with various land owners. Originally part of a larger family farming/ranching operation, for 20 years tenants occupied the property, followed by two different families over a period of two decades.

William Henry Francis and his cousin, William Cole purchased all of Section 25 from the Northern Pacific Railway in 1900. Francis, “recognized as one of the successful and progressive stock raiser of Park County” came to Montana from Missouri seeking fresh prospects and a drier climate for his tuberculosis. After four years in the Gallatin Valley, he came over to the Shields Valley in July 1882, taking a homestead approximately seven miles from the mouth of the Shields River (near the later railway stop called Chadbourne).²³

William Cole received his homestead patent for 160 acres in Section 24, immediately north of Section 25. The following year (1902), William Cole retained the north half of Section 25 but sold the south half to William Francis, including the farmstead location. As previously stated, the common practice of family clustering is well illustrated by the Francis family. In 1899, Sarah Francis, wife of William Francis, purchased 320 acres while their son Thomas Francis received his homestead patent for 160 acres, both in Section 26,

¹⁹ US Census Bureau, “Agriculture,” 1925; Roland R. Renne, “Readjusting Montana’s Agriculture IV. Land Ownership and Tenure,” *Montana State College Agricultural Experiment Bulletin 310*, (February 1936).

²⁰ Ibid, 15.

²¹ Montana State Engineer, “Park County Montana,” *Water Resources Survey* Vol. 1 (Helena, MT: State Engineer’s Office, 1951): 10-11.

²² Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder and William L. Lang, *Montana A History of Two Centuries*, Revised Edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 320.

²³ Deed Book 30, page 162-63, Office of Clerk and Recorder, Park County Courthouse, Livingston, MT; hereinafter referred to as Deed Book; *Progressive Men of the State of Montana*, A. W. Bowen & Co., Chicago, 1902, 635-636 at www.lib.umt.edu.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 11

immediately west of Section 25 and the subject property. Charles Francis, another son, utilized the Desert Land Act to obtain another 320 acres in the immediate area. Both Charles and his brother Oscar continued to purchase lands to expand their holdings.²⁴

Although William Francis settled along the Shields River, his three oldest sons, bachelors all, Charles, then 32, Thomas, 30 and Oscar, 21, established the family's farming and ranching operations up on the bench lands. An old, abandoned county road still connects Chadbourne to the bench and has been used on occasion to drive cattle from a ranch in the lower valley to the benchlands.²⁵

Known as the Francis Brothers, their operation was well capitalized. The boys were able to acquire a threshing machine for their crops and threshed much of Shields River Valley grain for many years. In 1904, at the peak of their operations, the brothers both farmed and raised livestock and with their father, held almost 3,000 acres. They also established a sawmill on nearby Rock Creek. They used the sawmill to build the one and one-half story Victorian farmhouse directly east of the Chicken Creek farmstead. It is presumed that the brothers built the dwelling and at least the gambrel barn at the Chicken Creek farmstead as part of their operation. The three brothers lived and ranched together until eventually they all married and went their separate ways by the end of the decade.²⁶

In 1909, William and Sarah Francis sold the south half of Section 25 to Oliver M. Harvey, a lawyer from Livingston. A review of deed records show that Mr. Harvey invested considerably in land speculation in Park County. Since Harvey lived and worked in Livingston, presumably he leased out his ranch lands but it is not known who resided at the farmstead during this time. In 1918, Harvey sold the same 320 acres in the S1/2 of Section 25 which included the Chicken Creek farmstead to John J. Walters of Rock Creek. The 1920 Census lists John Walters as a 48 year old divorced farmer. He originally came from Germany and became a naturalized citizen in 1898.²⁷

Two local informants, Bill Gibson and Gordon Smith, who grew up in the area, both remembered the farmstead as the "Walters Place." However, Walters held the title to the property for only three years, when in 1921 he gave a quit claim deed to Edward M. Shelton, of Chicago, Illinois. Shelton originally partnered with Oliver Harvey in a law firm in Livingston, listed as "Harvey and Shelton." The 1920 Census shows Shelton in Chicago with a wife and daughter at home. Therefore, Shelton resided in Chicago, not Livingston, when he purchased this property. Alice Sarrazin, who grew up in the Rock Creek area, remembers that the Shelton family would come out every summer to visit.²⁸

Alice Sarrazin remembers hearing that Shelton bought the farmstead to keep his son out of the army. The 1922 *Polk Directory* lists John Walters residing in Chicago but by 1927, he again is listed as farming out of Clyde Park. There appears to be some connection between Shelton and Walters but the exact relationship has yet to be determined.²⁹ Walters remained on the property as a tenant farmer until he moved into Clyde Park in the 1930s. After Walters left, Charles H. Taylor with his wife, son and daughter-in-law rented the place for several years. The property remained in Shelton hands until 1942, when he sold it to Walter and Lena Hoffman.³⁰

The Hoffman family came from Peoria, Illinois and arrived in the spring of 1943. Walter Hoffman and a good friend had hunted in Montana and his friend talked him into moving here. Walter Hoffman farmed in Illinois and brought all of his equipment on a freight

²⁴ Information on land patents is taken from master Title Plats and General Land Office Control Documents Index cards, Microfiche, Records Room, Bureau of Land Management State Office, Billings, MT.

²⁵ Park County Historical Society, *History of Park County, Montana 1884*, (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1984), 202.

²⁶ *History of Park County*, 200, 201, 481; Thomas sold his homestead with the farmhouse to G. W. Shelhamer in 1906.

²⁷ Deed Book 38, page 288; Deed Book 56, page 410; US Census Bureau, 1920 Census "Montana" at www.heritagequestonline.com

²⁸ Bill Gibson, interview by Paul Manganiello, February 2008, Clyde Park, MT; Gordon Smith, interview by Paul Manganiello, February 2008, Clyde Park, MT; Deed Book 42, page 488; US Census Bureau, 1920 Census "Illinois;" Alice Sarrazin, interview by Joan L. Brownell, August 27, 2008, Clyde Park, MT.

²⁹ Sarrazin interview; *Polk Directory* "City of Livingston and Park County," 1922, 1927.

³⁰ Jim Taylor, interview by Joan L. Brownell, August 28, 2008, Clyde Park, MT; Deed Book 70 page 305.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 12

car to Clyde Park. The family stayed at the farmstead until Walter got tired of all the snow in calving season and moved over to Springdale.³¹

Hoffman held the property for 10 years, when he sold it to Ernest and Irene Beedle of Clyde Park in 1952. The property again changed hands less than 10 years later, when the Beedles sold it to Lawrence and Frances Carter in 1961. Raymond and Ivy Criswell purchased the land in 1964 from the Carter's. The current owners acquired the land from the Ivy Criswell estate in 2005, completing the chain of ownership to the present day.³² Ray Criswell was the grandson to Cyrus and Sara Criswell, who settled in the Rock Creek drainage in the early 1890s and whose ranch became one of the largest in the Shields Valley. Originally called the Double U Ranch, it is still intact but renamed the Crazy Mountain Ranch.³³

Since Paul and Rachel Manganiello arrived at their new home in 2005, they have worked diligently to restore life back into the farmstead. After removing years of debris from the property, they first tackled rehabilitating the farm dwelling. The rehabilitation of the gambrel barn, nearly completed, further revitalizes the farmstead. The Manganiellos efforts extend beyond their buildings towards the re-vegetation of the headwaters of Chicken Creek with the introduction of 20 varieties of trees and shrubs, native or suitable to the area. They also continue to lease out their agricultural lands, thereby allowing local farmers to remain on their family farms. The bright marigold color of the dwelling epitomizes the re-birth of the Chicken Creek farmstead.

³¹ Myrtle Hoffman, interview with Joan L. Brownell, August 28, 2008, Clyde Park, MT; Mark Hoffman, interview by Joan L. Brownell, August 27, 2008; Walter Hoffman's son Don Hoffman returned to Clyde Park and bought the Meat Market and Locker Plant in 1963.

³² Deed Book 95, Page 435-6; Deed Book 111, page 453-4; 455.

³³ *History of Park County*, 160.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 13

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 14

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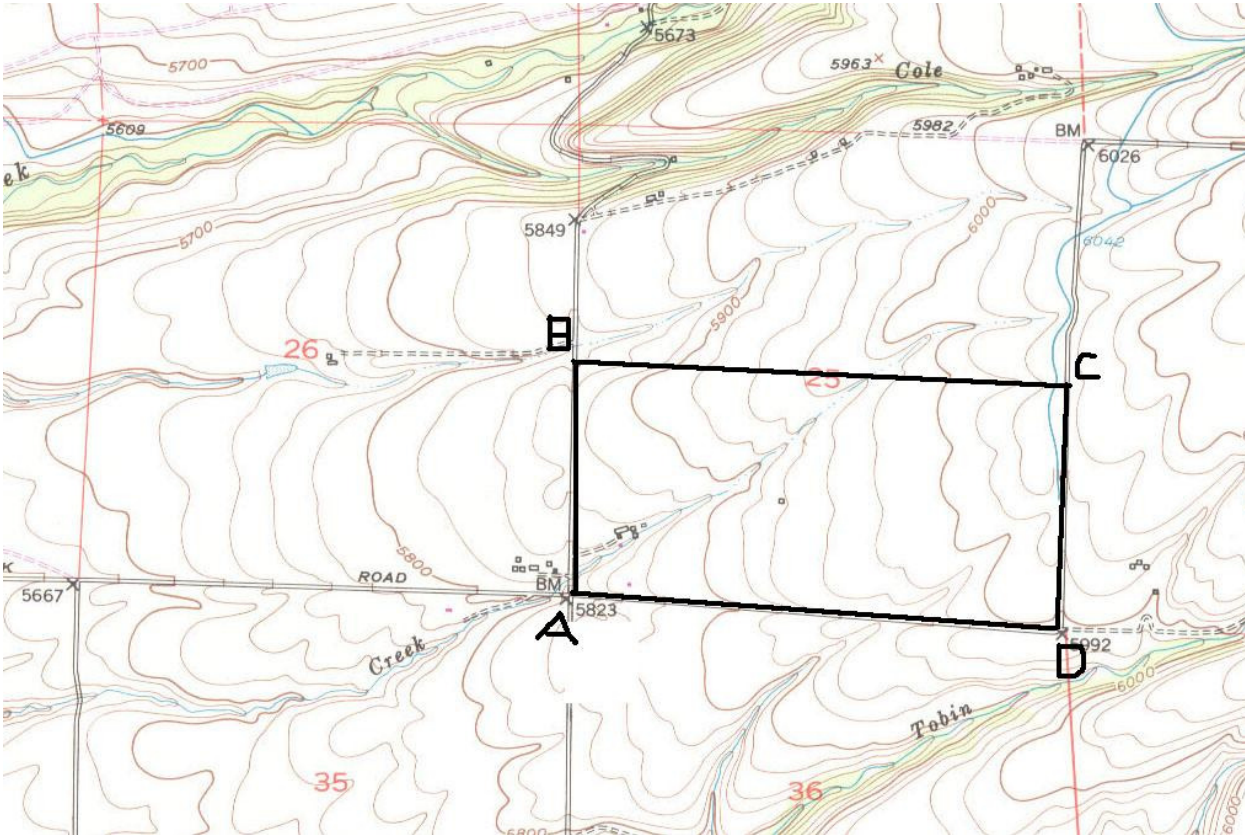
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 15



Detail of USGS 7.5 minute Quadrangle showing the location of the Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 16



2005 aerial view of Chicken Creek Farmstead showing the historic district boundary.

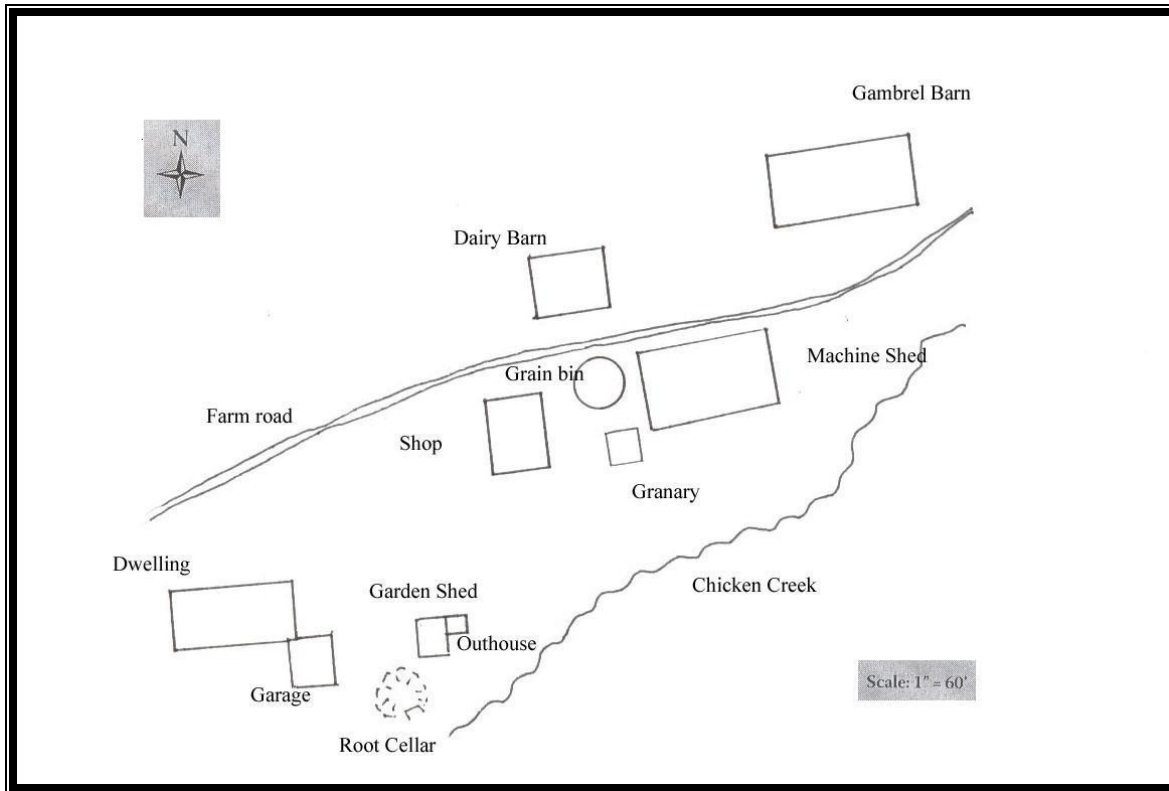
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District

Page 17



Chicken Creek Farmstead
Building Cluster Site Map

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 18

In accordance with the March 2005 Photo Policy expansion, the photos that accompany this nomination are printed on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper, using a Hewlett Packard 100 gray photo cartridge. This combination of paper and inks is included on the NR's list of "Acceptable Ink and Paper combinations for Digital Images." The images are also recorded on an archival CD-R with a resolution at least 1200x1800 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format.

Photographer: Joan L. Brownell
Date: August 2008
Negatives: Joan L. Brownell, Billings, MT.

<u>Photo Number</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	Overview of farmstead, view to north
2.	Dwelling, view to northeast
3.	Garage, view to southwest
4.	Garden Shed, view to south
5.	Outhouse, view to south
6.	Root cellar, view to northwest
7.	Shop, view to south/southeast
8.	Dairy Barn, view to northwest
9.	Gambrel Barn, view to southwest
10.	Grain Bin, view to southwest
11.	Granary, view to southwest
12.	Machine Shed, view to southwest
13.	Grain Bins, view to northwest
14.	1940s historic photograph

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 19



1. Overview of farmstead, view to north



2. Dwelling, view to northeast

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 20



3. Garage, view to southwest



4. Garden Shed, view to south

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 21



5. Outhouse, view to south



6. Root cellar, view to northwest

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 22



7. Shop, view to south/southeast



8. Dairy Barn, view to northwest

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 23



9. Gambrel Barn, view to southwest



10. Grain Bin and Granary, view to southwest

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 24



11. Machine Shed, view to southwest



12. Foundation, view to west

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Chicken Creek Farmstead Historic District
Park County, Montana

Page 25



13. Grain bins, view to /northwest



14. 1940s historic photograph.